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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ: PRESIDENT BUSH'S IRAQ SECURITY PLAN;  
SAO PAULO

"US's Historical Mistake"

Former Brazilian Ambassador to the US, Rubens Barbosa, commented in center-right national circulation daily O Estado de S. Paulo (2/13): "The invasion of Iraq has been perhaps the biggest US foreign policy mistake since the Vietnam War.... The current US administration has a particular view of the conflict.... There is no doubt that the end of the war in Iraq depends on the withdrawal of US occupation troops.... Despite all the pre-election rhetoric, the US is expected to remain in Iraq for the next five or ten years. The US can neither lose the war nor leave the Middle East. As a result of that, depending on Washington's foreign policy initiatives, the threat of terrorist actions in the US will hardly be reduced and the other serious problems in the region will become much more difficult to handle.... If such a picture is confirmed over the next two years, the price of oil will continue unstable, thereby increasing the vulnerability of medium and small economies, and global instability and insecurity will persist as a result of the Islamic population's reaction. Terrorism, which has its base of action in Afghanistan and now Iraq, will increase its threat to the international community. Washington's support to Israel in the conflict with the Palestinians and the US military presence in the Middle East are the main causes of the low prospective of peace and political stability in the region.... Even a possible US Democratic administration will hardly be able to promote a military withdrawal in Iraq without a profound transformation of the international scenario in the region."

McMullen